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CITY OF TRURO.

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# REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

TOGETHER WITH THAT OF THE

Sanitary Inspector,

for the Year 1937.

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TRURO :

J. A. CLEAVE, PYDAR STREET.



## TRURO.

THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND CITIZENS OF TRURO.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my annual report. It is once again my pleasure to be able to state that the health of the City has been good for the past twelve months.

There has been no epidemic of any notifiable disease, a few cases of Influenza occurred during the year, but these were of a very mild nature.

Truro City is built on the Fal River, the river being navigable at high tide to the City.

With its recently expanded boundaries the population may be taken as 12,640 for statistical purposes.

Area.	2,450 acres.
No. of inhabited houses	3,500
Rateable value	£75,934
Product of Id. Rate (est)	£285
Total Deaths	163 (Males 82. Females 81)
Death rate per 1,000 Truro City	12.9
" " " " England and Wales	12.4

Principal causes of Death.

(1) Pregnancy	2
(2) Cerebral Hæmorrhage	7
(3) Heart Disease	26
(4) Senility	30
(5) Cancer	18
(6) Pulmonary Tuberculosis	4
(7) Erysipelas	2

Cause of Death (1)

- a Delayed Chloroform Poisoning
- b Eclampsia

In the case of (b) this occurred in a Multipara who was suddenly taken ill. She had neither booked a Nurse, nor attended the Maternity Welfare Centre nor seen a doctor previously. When seen, she was removed at once to Hospital, but died shortly after being admitted.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis 2 Males, ages 54, 23. 2 Females, ages 53, 52.

Two of these cases were previously notified.

There has been no refusal or wilful neglect by Doctors in Truro to notify cases of Tuberculosis.

It was not found necessary during 1937 to compulsorily remove any case of Tuberculosis.

Total Live Births for Truro	154. Male 73. Females 81.
" Still Births " "	2.
" Illegitimate Births for Truro	9. Males 5, Females 4.
Birth Rate for Truro	12.1.
" " " England and Wales	14.9

### Infectious notifications for 1937.

Scarlet Fever 2. Diphtheria 9.

Three cases admitted from the Rural area as Scarlet Fever were found also to be suffering from Diphtheria, and were notified as occurring in Truro City.

Two other notified cases were, after admission, found to be NOT suffering from Diphtheria,

Lobar Pneumonia 9.

Tuberculosis (all pulmonary) 8. Males age 28, 39, 46.

Females age 23, 26, 18, 53, 34.

42 patients were removed to the City Isolation Hospital. Of these, 27 came from the Rural area, 6 from other outside areas.

There were 3 deaths of Infants under one year of age.

(a) 1 day old—convulsions.

(b) 1 day old—Birth injuries (precipitate labour).

(c) 2 days old—Epilepsy.

The Sanitary Inspector is the only whole-time officer employed, a grant towards his salary, and that of the M.O.H. being made by the Treasury.

There are four Nurses employed in the City Area.

1. One Maternity Nurse.

2. Three General Nurses who are occasionally employed for Maternity work when required.

A whole time Pathologist works at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary.

There are two Motor Ambulances in the City, one at the Isolation Hospital, owned by the City Council, used solely for infectious work, the second is maintained and operated by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Free Bacteriological examinations in cases of Diphtheria and free Serum in cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever are provided for those unable to pay.

There is a well attended Maternity and Infant Welfare Centre, the M.O.H. is also the M.O. in charge of the centre.

There is also an Orthopædic Centre in Truro.

Specialist Orthopædic, X-ray, Nose and Throat, and Pathological services are provided in Truro, at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary,

Truro Dispensary provides free medical treatment for patients unable to pay, at the M.O.'s Surgery, and patients are also visited by the M.O. at their own homes when necessary.

In addition there are two Public Assistance doctors and a Public Assistance Hospital for those in receipt of Relief.

By a mutual friendly agreement between doctors, National Health Insurance patients unable to pay, receive the benefit of specialist services free.

## Water.

This is provided by the Truro Water Co. and important extensions to recently built outside areas have been made. In some cases private wells are used, but it is hoped that eventually practically all water will be supplied by the Company.

The main ways of purification of water are by filtration under pressure through sand, chlorination by gas, and then de-chlorination. Tests are made twice daily.

Not less than 8 samples per annum are submitted for bacteriological examination, and one for chemical analysis, but it has been pointed out to the Water Co. by the M.O.H. that it is desirable to have a chemical analysis done quarterly.



At one time during 1937 a very serious shortage of water occurred, but steps are now being taken to provide an ample supplementary supply.

Samples were taken from public and private wells, and in cases of those giving unsatisfactory reports, the necessary steps were and are, being taken.

### **Drainage.**

The original drainage scheme has been completed and it is hoped to extend this system to all areas, but this unfortunately will take a considerable time. Meanwhile, experiment with a cess pit emptier is being tried. In spite of the drainage scheme and sewage farm, in flood times some sewage still enters the river.

There are no private or public swimming pools or baths in Truro.

### **Closet accommodation.**

Except for isolated houses in the added area, such as Highertown and Malpas, practically the whole of the W.C. accommodation in the City is on the water carriage system.

### **Shops**

No special action was taken during the year, but I am of opinion that action may be necessary to see that shops are kept to a reasonable temperature during cold weather. It has been found that in many cases shop doors are kept open, whilst there is little or no heating apparatus in the shop.

### **Eradication of Bugs.**

1. Private Houses.
2. Council Houses.

Method employed, and by whom carried out. How ascertained that belongings of tenants are free from bugs before being admitted to Council Houses.

1. Four.
2. Twenty.

Disinfested by means of spraying with proprietary liquids and by "Cimex" blocks. The furniture of tenants removing to Council houses is not compulsorily disinfested. Free disinfestation is undertaken at the request of householders. It is not considered that bug infestation is serious in the City.

### **Schools.**

The majority of the W.Cs. at the Schools are of the trough type, and are flushed at intervals during the day by automatic flushing cisterns.

All Schools are supplied with an adequate supply of water.

A scheme is in existence whereby children at Schools requiring medical attention for ear, nose or throat trouble are dealt with at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary.

The parents of all children admitted to the City Isolation Hospital showing unhealthy conditions of the nose and throat are advised of their condition and are urged to obtain treatment for them after leaving the Hospital, or, in cases of Diphtheria carriers, removed at the Isolation Hospital.

**Meat and Slaughter Houses.**

Carcases inspected and condemned.

Tubercle in Meat—prosecutions.      See table attached.

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed (if known) ...		not	known		
Number inspected (approx.) . .	604	110	75	750	208
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis</i> Whole carcasses condemned			nil		
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned.	12	2	2	6	12
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuber- culosis.					
<i>Tuberculosis only.</i> Whole carcasses condemned	1		nil		
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned.	3			1	25
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis.					

One butcher was warned by the Sanitary Inspector for failing to detect tuberculosis in a pig's head. Proceedings were taken against a butcher for exposing tuberculosis meat in a street van, and a fine was imposed.

The general condition of the meat sold in the City continues to be of good quality and generally free from disease.

**Milk.**

Frequent samples were taken and submitted for analysis. On the whole the reports were satisfactory. In some cases, however, the bacterial count was rather high, and some samples showed B. Coli content in relatively small quantities of milk. In all cases the dairymen were communicated with, advised to take greater precautions regarding cleanliness, and further samples were taken. The latter usually gave better results, and it is thought the improvement in the milk supply can be best obtained by continuing this method of sampling and advice to dairymen.

**Tuberculosis in Milk.**

NIL.

It is interesting to compare the report for 1906 with that for 1937, in connection with Milk.

There were 34 deaths of Infants under one year of age in 1906, due, in about 30 cases to diarrhœa.

There have been no deaths from epidemic diarrhœa in Truro for very many years, and I have not even heard of a case for at least ten years. I attribute this to good work done at the Infant Welfare Centre, and to work being quietly done to educate the public regarding clean milk.

### **Rag and Flock Acts.**

So far as is known, there are no Rag and Flock Manufactories in the City.

### **Maternity Work.**

The scheme suggested by me in my 1936 report to the County Authorities has not been carried out.

In view of the prevalence of Poliomyelitis in Devon, the County Authorities, with permission by the City Council, were approached by the City M.O.H. with a view to a scheme being drafted whereby the City Isolation Hospital might be used should the epidemic spread to Cornwall, but nothing further was done.

### **Overcrowding.**

The gradual re-housing of families under the slum clearance scheme has resulted in the abatement of many cases of overcrowding. Special consideration has also been given to this matter when Council houses fall vacant, and by these means there has been a considerable reduction in the number of overcrowded families. No special building scheme has been undertaken for the relief of overcrowding, apart from Slum Clearance.

### **Isolation Hospital.**

This Hospital is maintained, and has been maintained for a number of years by the Truro Urban and Rural Authorities. No assistance is given by any outside authority. The Hospital has been found adequate for treatment of all notifiable diseases arising in these areas for the last ten years, no case being refused admission. Furthermore, it has come to the assistance of outside authorities in such cases as Diphtheria, Cerebro-spinal Meningitis, Scarlet Fever, Paratyphoid, operation on antrum in Scarlet Fever, removal of Tonsils in persistent Diphtheria carriers. By the Ministry of Health scale, 14 patients can be accommodated, but there has never been any difficulty in accommodating 21 patients. I consider the air space standard laid down by the Ministry as too high, especially when it is remembered most of the patients admitted are children.

### **Royal Cornwall Infirmary.**

This Hospital is being rebuilt, and greatly enlarged. The number of Orthopædic beds will be greatly increased.

Some years ago there was a meeting between representatives of the City Council and the Royal Cornwall Infirmary Committee. The necessity of some form of observation ward for possible infectious cases was urged by the former, and agreed to by the latter. It is conceivable that more cases will be sent to the Royal Cornwall Infirmary from outside areas for diagnosis, and owing to the possibility of some of these cases proving to be infectious, it would be a great advantage to have some form of isolation block at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary where possible infectious cases could be isolated and kept under observation until the true nature of the case is ascertained, and then dealt with in a suitable manner.

### **General progress during the last ten years.**

The main sanitary improvement has been the carrying out of a sewage disposal scheme whereby the discharge of crude sewage into the river has been obviated.

The Slum Clearance Scheme has also resulted in a great improvement in the general housing conditions in the City.

House refuse collection has been carried out under better conditions by the provision of covered motor vehicles.

Improvements at the Isolation Hospital have been carried out.

A careful watch has been kept on the water, milk and meat supplies.



1. <i>Inspection of Dwelling houses during the Year 1937 :—</i>	
(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	95
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	126
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ...	95
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	126
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	95
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	—
2. <i>Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices :—</i>	
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers.	12
3. <i>Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :—</i>	
(a).—Proceedings under sections 17, 18, and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners ...	Nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ...	—
(b).—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ...	10
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :	
(a) By owners ...	10
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ...	—
(c).—Proceedings under sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930 :	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	2
(d).—Proceedings under section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930 :	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	2
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ...	Nil
4. <i>Housing Act, 1935.—Overcrowding :—</i>	
(a).— (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year ...	29
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein ...	29
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein ...	145
(b). Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	3
(c).— (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year...	30
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases ...	164

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

J. G. M. MOLONY,

Medical Officer of Health.



SANITARY INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT,  
MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS,  
TRURO.

THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND CITIZENS  
OF THE CITY OF TRURO.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1937.

**Housing.** The work in connection with the preparation of the necessary documents and plans for the final stages of the Five Year Slum Clearance Scheme was put in hand but no actual clearance areas were declared during the year. The new building programme had been delayed and it was thought desirable to withhold the making of further orders until the building programme was further advanced.

During the year 409 tenants from 99 houses in previously confirmed clearance areas were re-housed at Trelander.

Demolition of the premises in Clearance Areas from which all the tenants were displaced has proceeded satisfactorily, and in the main, the areas were completely cleared and some have already been utilised for other purposes.

**Individual Houses.** Apart from the houses dealt with under the Clearance Area procedure, formal action was taken to secure the closure of certain houses or parts of houses which were considered to be unfit for habitation. Demolition Orders were made, and the premises demolished, in respect of two houses at Calenick Street. Undertakings that houses should not be used for human habitation in respect of two houses at Sunrise Cottages, two at Mill Place, and one at Lower Rosewin Row were accepted by the Council. Parts of two houses at St. Austell Street were also closed, and altogether 7 families, totalling 32 persons, were re-housed by the Council from these premises.

Two applications for certificates that certain premises at Lower Rosewin Row and Baynards Quarry would not be included in Clearance Areas if works approved by the Council were carried out by the owners were approved. Two such applications affecting three houses, were not approved.

I received a large number of requests from occupiers of houses not in Clearance Areas for assistance in obtaining more suitable accommodation. Some families whose names I submitted to the Finance Committee were allocated Council houses but there is still a large unsatisfied demand for better housing accommodation.

**Overcrowding.** Although no special building programme has yet been undertaken by the Council for the relief of overcrowding, considerable progress was made during the year. A number of overcrowded families living in condemned houses were re-housed under the Slum Clearance Scheme, and other families were allocated vacant Council houses, the policy being in most cases to give preference to overcrowded families.

**Isolation Hospital.** The Isolation Hospital was almost continuously in use during the year, but the majority of patients were from outside the City, viz. : from the Truro Rural Area and from two other areas at the special request of the local authorities.

The Hospital has been kept well equipped and all the patients have been promptly removed, and the premises generally well maintained.

**Meat and Food Inspection.** Regular inspections of slaughter houses were made during the year during times of slaughtering. One new slaughter house was erected and licensed. Many visits were paid to butchers' shops at varying times and a watch was also kept upon the meat offered for sale from street vans. On one occasion tuberculous meat was found in a street van and seized. The Council ordered the vendor to be prosecuted and a fine of £5 and costs was imposed by the bench.

In general the meat sold in the City continues to be of a high quality, and the meat from bovines was usually found to be free from disease and in only one case was generalised tuberculosis found. There were a number of voluntary surrenders of tuberculous pigs' heads and of unsound tinned meats.

**Bekehouses.** These were all visited and found to be in a very fair condition.

**Milk and Dairies.** These were all visited and attention called to any defects which existed.

Thirteen samples of milk were taken from retailers and submitted for examination for bacterial count and for tuberculosis test. In no case was there a positive T.B. result, and where the samples did not reach a satisfactory standard the retailer was informed and asked to take necessary precautions.

**Rats and Mice Destruction Act.** Free baits and advice were given to all applicants for assistance in destroying rats and mice. Public attention was called to the matter during Rat Week by means of posters. There is now little cause for complaint as to the number of rats at the Boscawen Park refuse dump.

**Water Supply.** Very satisfactory reports upon the quality of the water supplied by the Truro Water Co. were received during the year and submitted to the Council. Satisfactory reports were also made upon samples of water submitted for examination from two privately owned reservoirs at Highertown and Tresawles Road. A well used by certain residents at Highertown was found to be polluted and application was made to the Court for the well to be closed. The Court ordered the pump which was accessible to the public to be removed but made no order to close the well. A supply of water from the Water Co.'s mains was subsequently laid on to the houses previously obtaining water from the well.

**Shops Acts.** A number of inspections were made of the shops under the new Acts. In several cases it was found necessary to call attention to the fact that a reasonable temperature was not being maintained in the shops during the winter months by reason of the practice to keep the shop door open, and there being no suitable heating apparatus inside the shop.

**Gas Regulation Act.** Six tests during each quarter were made of the gas supplied by the Truro Gas Co., and in no case did the gas fail to reach the standards prescribed by the Gas Referees. The tests are for calorific value, pressure, and freedom from  $H_2S$ .

**Hackney Carriages.** All carriages were inspected by the Hackney Carriage Committee, and there were no complaints as to the conduct of licencees during the year.

**Generally.** The City was free from any serious outbreak of Infectious Disease during the year. All complaints of a bona fide nature were investigated and the necessary action taken in case of necessity. No legal proceedings were found to be necessary to secure the abatement of nuisances, and it is rarely found necessary to serve statutory notices in this connection.

I am, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

W. H. ENNOR, Cert. R.S.I., M.S.I.A.



